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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 15th  
ELECTION, TRANSPARENCY; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: The major theme in today's editorials is the  
upcoming election.

Analysis: Quasi-independent As-Sabah published a front-page editorial, "Elections" outlining the meaning and definition of elections in civilized societies and the problems Iraq is facing in dealing with electoral fraud. The editorial noted, "it is not a shame to say that the current electoral battle has witnessed unacceptable methods but we hope the coming election will not witness the same infractions."

The independent Democratic Al-Wifaq published a front-page editorial entitled "Iraq: Political Thievery and Banditry," criticizing the political carpetbaggers who have recently invaded Iraq. They are characterized as "powers that are loyal to the occupation. it seems that the groups that work with the occupation have become desperate. The Iraqi people are tired of those parties because they are old and our people need new, young, patriotic political parties," the editorialist argued.

Al-Mutamar's page-fifteen editorials dealt with the election, democracy and the political process without specific reference to any electoral list.

The KDP's At-Taakhi published a page-three editorial, "List 730 is the List of the Federal Iraqi Country" urging the faithful to vote for the Kurdish list.

The PUK's Al-Ittihad's page-three editorial, "The Happiness of Elections and the Happiness of Winning Represents Iraqi Will" dealt with the ecstasy Iraqis felt as their soccer team triumphed in the finals of the Asian championship and how that victory coincided with preparations Iraqis are making to participate in the coming election.

SCIRI's mouthpiece, Al-Adala's page-three editorial, "Worry" predicted that the majority of people are loyal to the UIA's list and will vote for it in the coming election.

Ad-Dawa's Al-Bayyan published its editorials on page five, including one final appeal entitled: "In Order to Prevent the Return of Tyranny Vote for the Faithful," imploring people to vote for the Shi'a list 555. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
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- 1A. "This Is How the Occupation and Government Prepare a Positive Environment for the Elections" (Rayat Al-Arab -- affiliated with the Arab Nationalist Trend in Iraq, anti-coalition, published this front-page unattributed editorial)

"Urban warfare, waged by the occupation and Iraqi government forces, has continued. This war escalates as soon as the country witnesses an important event such as the elections or a referendum. We all know that governments work hard to provide suitable environments for the elections but we have a different procedure in Iraq.

"During the last election, the city of Fallujah was invaded and this attack caused patriotic groups, and most Iraqis, to boycott it. In addition, before the referendum, the cities of Anbar, Tal Afar and Sadr City were attacked. Similarly today, the provinces of Baghdad, Anbar and Salah ad-Din have been invaded. Moreover, the government announced on Wednesday that martial law was imposed in the provinces of Anbar and Ninawa.

"The occupation and the Iraqi government must be responsible for providing a suitable environment to make the political process successful. They must work hard to ease the situation and reduce tension. Furthermore, they should release prisoners and detainees. They should also make everybody feel that it is important to participate in the political process. Arrests, raids and killing people mean that the occupation and the government do not care about the widespread participation of all Iraqi people. It seems that there are specific groups that insist on preventing important segments of Iraqis from participation in the political process.

"We call on an immediate cessation of all military operations. We also call for occupation forces to withdraw from cities and villages. Additionally, all detainees in the prisons of the occupation, Ministry of Interior and all other secret and illegal prisons must be released. This will ensure Iraqis that there will be an honest election. Otherwise, the upcoming election will be a carbon copy of the former election and the referendum where people's willpower was forged and the process was a real farce."

**B. "12-15-05"**

(Az-Zaman - independent, published this page-three editorial by Sa'ad Abbas)

"Regardless of which electoral list will win the election, it is important for us that voters should win this election. If voters win the election, this means that they chose the best and most qualified candidates whose actions speak louder than words or slogans. Perhaps, there are many candidates we know as friends or relatives but this does not mean they are qualified. For this reason, I call on voters to elect candidates who deserve their votes.

"We must populate the next parliament with honest and qualified figures. At the same time, we can make it a circus that includes washouts and those who call for sectarianism and extremism. I think we must elect candidates who care about our present and future. We must choose the candidate who believes in the principles of citizenship and rights of citizens. The next four years must make us think twice before we make our decision in the election. These four years can be successful and safe or they can facilitate the current corruption, fears and chaos. These four years will not be good unless moderate, democratic and honest--and not radical, tyrannical and corrupt politicians occupy seats in the parliament.

"Iraq has become a desert and we have to elect those who can restore its gardens and orchards. Disease and malnutrition has spread in Iraq and for this reason, we must elect those who can cure us and provide food for the people. Let us elect those who are not afraid of terrorists, robbers or racists. Electoral lists do not know who will really elect them. However, the voters will decide who to vote for after they stand before the ballot boxes. Then, voters will forget about electoral ads and posters and they will remember one important issue, which is to vote for candidates who deserve their votes."

**C. "Are You Going to Elect Them?"**

(Al-Khalaas -- no bias, affiliated with National Salvation Front led by Assem Ayyed Al-Jibouri, published this page-two editorial by Samir Ghaleb)

"Some candidates have announced their electoral platforms through press conferences or parties in palaces. These parties coincide with dozens of Iraqi victims who are dying on a daily basis through ugly violence. It seems that those candidates do not care about what is happening in the country. They did not tire themselves to leave their palaces inside the Green Zone to look after our deprived people in the streets.

"All we have seen is just words and slogans from those candidates who are not able to achieve their promises and the Iraqi people know this fact very well. Electoral slogans and promises have not addressed how to end the current bloodshed in Iraq. On the other hand, these slogans promised people the removal of trash from cities and the capture of robbers who robbed Iraq in the past. However, those slogans do not speak about capturing the current robbers in Iraq.

"Amid these electoral promises and slogans, candidates only care about how to absorb unemployment, defend the rights of women and insist on deba'athification. It seems that most of the candidates promise citizens they'll fight ethnic power sharing, sectarianism, ensuring the unity of Iraq and expelling the occupation from the country. But, the reality shows that those candidates do not achieve their promises whether they win or lose the election.

"Finally, we say to those candidates that statistics have

shown fifty Iraqis are killed daily. Whereas, those candidates who aspire to gain a seat in the parliament do not care about Iraqi blood and they do not work to stop this bloodshed. If this bloodshed stopped, the trade of those candidates would be lost. Therefore, every honest Iraqi must think twice before giving their votes because they must elect the best and most honest candidate."

**D. "Electoral Violence and Us"**

(Al-Fourat - independent, anti-coalition, published this page-two editorial by Muhammad Mahdi Hussein)

"We as Iraqis should admit that we do enjoy democratic traditions and we have not experienced real elections yet. We used to have false elections where we would see 99.99% votes for one candidate or party. For this reason, our political entities could not comprehend the meaning of the electoral process, which calls for respecting other people's opinions.

"Some of those political parties have started to liquidate their political opponents. Other entities want to defame one another. Moreover, we have started to see some groups rip down electoral posters and pictures of other candidates. The democratic experiment which Iraqis are trying to establish today will cost much blood and effort. The electoral violence represents wrong behavior that aims to destroy the political process and rebuilding of Iraq.

"We would be happy if everybody called for the unity of the country. One day, one of Napoleon's hired spies tried to shake hands with him, but Napoleon refused to shake his hand and offered him a sum of money instead, saying, 'whoever sells his country does not deserve handshaking.' Similarly, whoever thinks that making relationships with other countries at the expense of their country's interest must understand that Iraqis will not be deceived any longer."

**E. "For Whom Are We Going to Vote?"**

(As-Sabah Al-Jadeed - independent, no bias, published this page-four editorial by Hasaballah Yahia)

"Who are those who suddenly announced themselves as candidates for the upcoming election? How could they dare to present their platforms to us while they have no skills, qualifications or [history of] struggle? How can we elect someone we do not know anything about? We do not know if those candidates are honest or qualified to undertake senior governmental positions.

"In fact, we do not know how such candidates will be able to serve people while they care only about their own interests. However, today, we can choose freely the honest and qualified candidate. We must not mistakenly follow false electoral slogans. We must pay more attention to our choices.

"We must choose the candidate who will be able to give, build and love. We must elect the candidate who can achieve dreams of living in the peace that we aspire. We must select a prosperous and safe life and finally, we have to choose the right way of life."

KHALILZAD